

General Petraeus Re-enlists Mass. Guard Soldiers

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hickey, 972nd Military Police Company

BAGHDAD, IRAQ - The 972nd Military Police Company received the distinct honor of hosting a reenlistment ceremony for 15 of its Soldiers here on February 10th. The reenlistment oath was administered by Gen. David Petraeus, the Commanding General of Multi National Forces - Iraq. The ceremony also included two Soldiers from Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment of the Massachusetts National Guard and seven Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 720th Military Police Battalion.

The ceremony was held poolside at Freedom Rest, a rest and relaxation facility co-located with the 972nd's home away from home, Forward Operating Base Freedom. The ceremony was well-attended and honored guests included Command Sgt. Major Bernard McPherson, command sergeant major of the 18th Military Police Brigade; Lt. Col. Frank Y. Rangel, commander of the 720th Military Police Battalion; and Command Sgt. Major J. Drew Craig, command sergeant major of the 720th.

The ceremony was the culmination of weeks of hard work and coordination by 1st Sgt. Steven Buccheri as the result of a chance meeting he had with a member of Petraeus' staff. Buccheri figured "it couldn't hurt to ask," and was a bit surprised when things started coming together. "With so many units in theater, we were pleasantly surprised that General Petraeus agreed to join us for our ceremony," said Buccheri.

Petraeus spoke of the dedication and commitment of the reenlistees and the entire company as well as his appreciation of the personal sacrifices of the Soldiers and their families as a result of their service to their country. He then shook hands with the Soldiers and presented each of them with his coin. After the ceremony, each Soldier was presented with their Oath of Reenlistment Certificate, personally signed by General Petraeus. "I think it was great," said Staff Sgt. John Quinn, the unit retention NCO, "these Soldiers will remember this for the rest of their lives."